

BlackJack Royale

BLACKJACK ROYALE

Version 2.0

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(c) 1983

BLACKJACK ROYAL was written in early 1982 by the author on a 32k TRS-80 Color Computer for his personal use without thought being given to 16k memory restrictions or marketing at the time. Having been a BlackJack player for many years I purchased every BlackJack program for the Color Computer hoping to find one that was a simulation, not just a game that would teach card counting against specific house rules. None of them provided all these features and necessary soon became the mother of invention.

Card counting depends upon rapid recognition of the cards and 16k BlackJack games used simple card faces that are not good for practice. Suits are not observed in BlackJack so this program uses only one suit of diamonds. The computer is a wiz at keeping track of things like card counts and it seemed overdue for a program that would use the high speed advantages of a computer to aid those who want to develop a winning system to even the odds at the casinos. Not all casinos use exactly the same set of rules or number of decks and each rule change however slight will affect your strategy and the house advantage.

BlackJack is one of the few casino games where if you understand the game well and can count cards you should be able to at least negate the house advantage or at best to give you about a 5% edge. Size of bets in relation to your initial and current bankroll is of equal importance. Most gamblers who always bet the same amount each and every game are bound to lose it all. Varying the bets will allow you to bet higher when you know the deck favors you and if you win, will reduce your overall losses. As a general rule you should never bet more than 2% of your original bankroll.

Many casinos in Atlantic City have games with up to 8 decks to make card counting harder and most often deal from a shoe rather than the dealer having to handle the decks by hand.

The purpose of this program you have purchased is to allow you win back the purchase price many times over by teaching yourself the skills needed to play winning BlackJack. And there seem to be no bugs. Should you find any please let us know. Feedback, comments and criticisms are welcome.

When the program has been loaded the title page will appear. Press any key to begin. The menu will list 3 options:

- (1) PLAY GAME
- (2) EXAMINE RULES
- (3) CHANGE RULES

Press 2 and the preset casino play rules will be displayed. They are; A one deck game, reshuffled at random with the top card burnt and the dealer's card dealt face down. Press any key to return to the menu. Press menu selection (1) to begin the game.

You will be asked how many one dollar chips you want to buy in with. Enter the number without a dollar sign (\$) and press (ENTER).

The cards are shuffled and you cut them by pressing any key when prompted by the dealer. The bet box will appear at the lower left and in the center of the screen will say "BET?". Enter the number of one dollar chips for your bet without a dollar sign (\$) and press (ENTER). This amount will be

subtracted from your bankroll at the bottom right and placed in your bet box.

The dealer deals two cards each to the player and himself (the author's favorite dealers are female). If the dealer's up card is an Ace you will be asked to place an optional insurance bet. To take this side bet press 'Y' and half of the amount of your original bet will be subtracted from your bankroll and placed in the insurance strip in the center of the screen. To decline the insurance bet press 'N'. If the dealer has a BlackJack (a two card total of 21) and you don't, you lose your original bet and are paid 2-1 on the insurance bet. If you have BlackJack and the dealer does not then you win a payoff of 3-2. If the dealer has an Ace as her hole card and BlackJacks, no insurance bet will be made. If neither the dealer nor the player has BlackJack then the game continues.

"HIT?" will appear on the screen and you will have the following options;

Y YES, HIT ME (TAKE ANOTHER CARD)

N NO, I WILL STAND ON MY TOTAL

D DOUBLE DOWN. YOUR BET IS DOUBLED AND YOU MUST TAKE ONE ADDITIONAL CARD AND STAND ON THE TOTAL

S SURRENDER. YOUR FIRST TWO CARDS ARE DISCARDED AND TWO NEW CARDS ARE DEALT. YOUR BET IS CUT IN HALF.

P PAIR OF CARDS TO BE SPLIT AND PLAYED AS SEPARATE HANDS. A SECOND BET BOX IS DRAWN AND AN AMOUNT EQUAL TO THE FIRST BET IS TAKEN FROM YOUR BANKROLL PLACED IN THE NEW BET BOX. PLAY THE FIRST HAND TO COMPLETION AND THEN PLAY THE SECOND HAND.

THIS OPTION REVEALS A TEXT SCREEN FOR CARD COUNTING. PRESS ANY KEY TO RETURN TO THE GAME.

After the third card has been dealt your options are reduced to Y, N and DOWN ARROW. When the player has gone over 21 or stands, the dealer plays her hand and makes the payoff.

WIN-- If your total is 21 or less and higher than the dealers or if the dealer busts then you win and your winnings are placed in your bet box above your original bet.

LOSE-- If you bust or if the dealer's total is higher than you, you lose and your bet is removed.

PUSH-- If your total and the dealer's is the same then the game is a tie and no money changes hand.

When the game is over you may start another game by pressing any key. The game board will be cleared and any winnings will be added to your bankroll. At this point you may quit playing by pressing "Q" and a text screen will display the statistics of the round of play. At the bet prompt you may ask the dealer to reshuffle by pressing "R".

MENU SELECTION (3) CHANGE RULES

By using this option you may change the preset rules to match those of any casino. The first question asks, "HOW MANY DESKS DO YOU WANT?" You may select 1,2,4,6 or 8 decks in which to play the game.

Next is "SHUFFLE HOW OFTEN?" Press 1,2 or 3 to establish how often the dealer is to shuffle the deck(s). The third question asks "DEALER'S HOLE CARD FACE UP OR DOWN?" Press 1 to deal it face up with no insurance bet or press 2 to deal it face down as in the practice at 98% of the world's casinos.

The next question is "BURN OR DEAL TOP CARD AFTER SHUFFLE?" To burn a card means that after the shuffle and cut the top card is removed from the deck and either placed upside down at the bottom of the deck(s) as a marker or the burnt card is placed in a discard tray and is not used in current game. Selecting '1' will burn it, option '2' will deal it. Most casino dealers do not try to conceal the face of the burnt card but they do not openly display it either. You have to be quick and watch the deck. Same here. The burnt card will be displayed at the top right of the screen for less than a second.

The last question deals with entering card counting point values. To skip this option press "N" and the main menu will reappear. To enter point values press "Y". You will be asked to assign a value for all ten types of cards. Since Tens, Kings, Queen and Jack all receive the same value, the point value for 10 value cards will cover them. Enter the value for the card types, 1 (ACE) through

ing, Queen, Jack). You may use any positive or negative number for the card count point values. After this is done you returned to the menu where you may begin the game play with option '1' or option '2' to examine the rules and point values you just entered.

No card counting point value system has been preset in this program to avoid possible copyright infringement found in commercial BlackJack winning systems. Most systems use values of +1, 0 and -1 while others use 5 and 10 to make counting as easy as possible. One of the main objectives of this program is to allow entry of these systems for evaluation against the exact rules of a specific casino. Remember that the card count point value is added to the deck point value after each card is dealt.

TOKING

By using odd or even size bets you can regulate the tokens (tips) given to the dealer. On a winning hand with a \$5 bet you are paid \$5 over and above your bet, or 2-1. However, on a \$5 bet, BlackJack pays 3-2 or \$7.50. But you will only be paid \$7 with the fractional amount rounded down and given to the dealer as a tip. If you surrender a hand with a \$5 bet your bet is rounded down to \$2 or if you insure a \$5 size bet your insurance bet would be rounded down to \$2 and your original bet of \$5 remains the same.

This feature has been added to further simulate actual casino play. Many casinos pay their dealers minimum wage plus tips. Even though they work for the casino they stand a better chance of tokens if you win more than lose. Besides being a gratuity it is very practical. If the pit boss is not standing at the table the dealer may 'FORGET' to reshuffle thus aiding card counters who take well. If you are a tight tipper then only make even size bets like \$2, \$10, \$20 etc.

You may quit playing by pressing "Q" at the bet prompt. A text screen will display the statistics of the round of play. This screen will also come up if you go broke. It should be pointed out that the total hands played number is from a running count made before any pairs are split. The hands WIN/LOST number will however reflect the outcome of split pairs played as separate hands.

CARD COUNTING TEXT SCREEN

You may view this screen anytime during game play or before you make a bet using the down arrow key and return to the game by pressing any key.

Learning the basics of counting cards is not too difficult if you have good concentration and a desire to learn. Developing an effective winning strategy based upon your count is quite another matter.

The best place to start is counting ten value cards using one deck in which there are 16. It is not always necessary to look at the suite or symbol, but to 'COUNT THE INK'. The reverse is true of aces which have a centralization or lack of ink.

The next count is total number of percentage of cards remaining to be dealt. This number does not have to be exact. Subtract 2% for each card dealt or 10% for every 5 dealt.

These three counts, Tens, Aces, and total are the most important in playing BlackJack with a card counting system. Every player has a unique or peculiar method for keeping track of all the counts. Some use a number like 8-3-37 to signify that 8 Tens, 3 Aces have been dealt with 37 cards dealt or remaining to be dealt. Others use a mental image of a blackboard or scoreboard that is being changed with every deal and going blank at the shuffle.

The card counting text screen displays how many decks are used in the game and how many cards have been dealt so far. The deck point value is displayed next that adds the value that you have assigned for each card dealt. This number will give you an idea of the richness of the deck in tens and aces.

Next there are four columns that display the card type, how many have been dealt so far, out of how many exist in the number of decks used in the game, and the card counting point value for that card. Your task is to develop a mental system for maintaining the basic counts and compare your count with the computer's running count. Card counting is brought into play when determining the bet size and when deciding to hit, stand, double or surrender. It is also helpful when deciding to make an insurance bet but as a general rule this side bet should never be taken.

Bear in mind that you can play perfect BlackJack according to whatever system and still lose! No system is perfect and even if you are counting each and every card dealt you still can't predict what card will come up next. At best you can predict the odds of a particular card being dealt next. The rest is luck...

Casinos are very aware of card counters who can negate the house advantage built into the house rules. Many larger casinos have a laser scan device in the 'EYE IN THE SKY' above the game floor to detect cheating devices that players may conceal.

Dealers and pit bosses are trained to detect card counters and dealers in high stakes games often must be able to count cards themselves so they will shuffle the deck when the deck favors the player. Some dealers can cheat by peeking at the top two cards and hitting you with the higher card to bust you. BE AWARE!!!

CASINO VIDEO BLACKJACK

On one of many research trips to casinos to develop this program I noticed the video BlackJack machines alongside the slots. I dropped a silver dollar down the throat of one and BlackJack! Encouraged by this I tried it again and lost more than won. So I tried the machine alongside it and BlackJack! I realized that if you let the machines sit cold for about 2 minutes between play you will win the first hand on each machine more times than not. Not all casinos have their software rigged this way but a few tries should tell you. Enjoy some of those free drinks you had to pass up at the tables to keep your concentration and try it!

GENERAL NOTES ABOUT THE PROGRAM

There are many features in this version 2.0 from the original release, most of which deal with faster graphics and bet limits. The maximum amount of chips you can buy in for is \$10,000 and the maximum bet before double down is \$1,000. Very few gamblers have larger bankrolls to play around with and bets over \$1,000 or ever \$100 will attract attention from the pit boss especially if you are winning more than losing.

CLOSING

Report from many customers indicate that they have used this program to sharpen their card skills to win at casinos. One person even took his Color Computer and BlackJack Royale to Harrah's in Reno and entered the current house rules and warmed up before hitting the tables.

None have claimed to have won fortunes but many say that their winnings exceeded the trip and expenses and come out a little ahead. This is what I had hoped for when the program was made public and I hope you can do the same.

BEST OF LUCK!

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